

London
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SOCIETY
FOR
BETTERING THE CONDITION
AND
INCREASING *the* COMFORTS of *the* POOR.

PATRON, THE KING.



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THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

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MATTHEW MARTIN, Esq. SECRETARY.

THE first meeting of the Society was held on the 21st of December, 1796, in pursuance of a circular Letter from three of the Members, explaining generally the nature and object of the proposed Institution : of which Letter the following is an extract.

“ THE purport of this Letter is to propose the formation of a “ Society for increasing the Comforts and bettering the Condition of the Poor ”; an establishment which, we trust, may be the means of adding much to the general mass of national happiness.—In other liberal pursuits, the joint labours of intelligent and active men have never failed to produce considerable effects. Models, inventions, and experiments, have been improved and applied to purposes of great importance. The same degree of success may reasonably be expected from a Society formed for the improvement of the most beneficial of all sciences—the promotion of the welfare of our fellow-creatures.

“ Its object would be—every thing that concerns the happiness of the Poor—every thing by which their comforts can be increased.—To remove the difficulties attending parochial relief, and the discouragement of industry and economy, by the

present mode of distributing it; to correct the abuses of workhouses; and to assist the poor in the establishing of their children in the world: in this, and in the improvement of their habitations and gardens; in assistance and information as to the use of fuel, so as to give them more benefit from it; and in adding to and meliorating their means of subsistence, by public kitchens, and by other means—much may be done by the union of liberal and benevolent minds—much by the circulation of information, and by personal assistance and influence.

“ It must afford a strong additional inducement to efforts of this nature to consider, that in proportion as we can multiply domestic comforts, in the same degree we may hope to promote the cause of morality and virtue. For a very gratifying illustration of this, as well as for the most important improvements in fuel, food, and in the mode of assisting the Poor, the world is indebted to the philanthropy and abilities of COUNT RUMFORD.

“ It is not, however, merely the increase of the comforts and morals of the poor, great as that benefit would be, that may be effected by the proposed establishment: its improvements and experiments will be more or less applicable to farms, manufactories, private families, and to every situation of life. But, supposing it otherwise,—were its object confined to the poor only; yet, to add to the plenty of a nation, by economising its means, and to strengthen, by increase of happiness, the attachment which every true Englishman feels to his country and its invaluable constitution, must be deemed, at any time, objects of no trifling consideration.”

It having appeared to the Society to be proper that they should state their general plan and object, and also the particular subjects upon which they are desirous of obtaining and circulating information, the following statements thereof have been agreed to and approved by the Society.

General RESOLUTION of the SOCIETY.

“ That the general object of the Society be to collect information,
 “ respecting the circumstances and situation of the poor, and the most
 “ effectual means of meliorating their condition; in order that any com-
 “ forts and advantages which the poor do now actually enjoy in any part
 “ of England, may eventually be extended to every part of it, with as
 “ much improvement and additional benefit as may be to the poor, and
 “ with a tendency gradually to diminish parochial expences. For the
 “ attainment of these ends, it appears to the Society, that the circulation
 “ of *useful* and *practical* information, derived from EXPERIENCE, and
 “ stated *briefly* and *plainly*, so as to be generally read and understood,
 “ may be of very great national and individual benefit; and may induce
 “ and enable all well-disposed persons, to unite in the promotion of an
 “ object so important to the happiness and welfare of the community
 “ at large, and particularly of that valuable branch of it, the labouring
 “ Poor.”

Subjects on which the Society is desirous of obtaining and circulating Information.

Parish Relief ; how it may be best directed for the benefit of the Poor.
 Friendly Societies ; their good effects, and how they may be best encouraged.
 Parish Workhouses ; the amendment of them.
 Cottage Gardens ; and the means of enabling the cottager to keep a cow.
 Parish Mills for corn ; and Parish Ovens.
 Village Shops ; for better supplying the Poor with the necessaries of life.
 Village Kitchens, and Soup-Shops.
 Cottage Fire-places and Chimnies ; the improvement of them.
 Fuel ; how the Poor may be better supplied with it.
 Apprentices to Manufacturers, and all parish apprentices.
 County Jails ; the means and effects of reforming them.
 Beggars ; the least exceptionable modes of assisting them.
 Public Rooms for the resort of the industrious Poor in cold weather.

Principal REGULATIONS of the SOCIETY.

MEMBERS of the General Committee to be chosen by the Committee, out of persons contributing, or agreeing to contribute, not less than five guineas, as an annual donation, or than fifty guineas as a donation for life.

Honorary Members to be chosen by the General Committee, out of persons contributing, or agreeing to contribute, not less than one guinea, as an annual donation, or than ten guineas as a donation for life.

All donations (if annual) to be for the year in which they are paid, computing to the 31st day of December ; and the continuance of them to be merely optional, it being understood that Members are to continue such so long only as their donations (if annual) are continued.

Honorary Members may be formed into Special Committees, for the furtherance of the objects of the Society in particular districts, with power to elect their own members out of the honorary or other members of the Society.

The reports, and printed proceedings of the Society, to be regularly sent to each Honorary Member.

Members of the General Committee to have a right of attending the General Meetings of the other Committees, but without a vote ; and Honorary Members to have a similar right of attending the General Meetings of the Committee.

The Society finding that a regular office will be necessary, has, for that purpose, taken a house, No. 3, Parliament-street, where the Secretary, MATTHEW MARTIN, Esq. (who is one of the Members of the Committee, and acts without any salary) will be resident ; to whom the Honorary Members are requested to address any communications with which they are disposed to favor the Society.

An account is opened at the banking-house of Messrs. Ransom, Morland, and Co. in Pall-mall ; where the subscriptions of those, who approve of the Institution, will be received for the use of the Society.

Contributors are requested to make their donations payable by their respective bankers, giving in to the Society such bankers' names, and leaving with such bankers their orders for their discontinuance, if they should think fit to discontinue them.

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